

What is claimed is:

1. An audio system configured to be mounted in a vehicle comprising:  
a housing;  
a processing means communicably connected to a compact disc drive, a user  
5 interface, memory, and an audio output, wherein the processing means, compact disc  
drive, user interface, and memory are disposed within the housing; and  
a hard drive disposed within the housing and adapted to be mounted to the  
housing and communicably connected to the processing means, such that the hard  
drive is readily removable from the housing;  
10 wherein the hard drive has a storage capacity of at least about 10 Gigabytes;  
wherein the processing means is configured to read data from a compact disc  
within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted files, and store  
the files within at least one of the memory and the hard drive; and  
wherein the processing means is configured to send an audio signal  
15 representative of the data in the stored files to the audio output.
2. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the audio system  
further includes a face plate attached to the housing, the face plate being adapted to be  
readily removable from the housing.  
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3. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the processing means is  
configured to read, encode, and store the data of the compact disc while  
simultaneously producing an audio signal representative of the data of the compact  
disc.  
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4. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the audio system is  
adapted to store the files within at least one of the hard drive and the memory.

5. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the audio system further comprises a connection for communicably connecting additional memory devices for use by the processing means.
- 5        6. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the hard drive is a removable USB 2.0 hard drive with a capacity of at least about 20 Gigabits.
7. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the audio system further comprises at least one of an AM tuner, an FM tuner, a digital tuner, and a  
10 digital receiver.
8. The audio system according to Claim 1 wherein the audio system is adapted to communicate with a device that is external to the housing.
- 15        9. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the compact disc drive is capable of reading and outputting the data stored on the compact disc within the compact disc drive wherein the data is in compact disc digital audio format.
10. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the processing means is  
20 configured to read data from a compact disc within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted files, and store the files within the memory, with the reading, encoding, and storing of the data occurring at a rate equal to or faster than a normal rate of play of the data.
- 25        11. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the housing meets the specifications of the single DIN standard.
12. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the housing meets the specifications of the double DIN standard.

13. The audio system according to Claim 1, wherein the memory is integral to the processing means, and the processing means is configured to read data from a compact disc within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted  
5 files, and store the files within the hard drive.

14. An audio system configured to be mounted in a vehicle comprising:  
a housing; and  
a processing means communicably connected to a compact disc drive, a user  
10 interface, memory, a hard drive, a tuner and an audio output, wherein the processing means, compact disc drive, user interface, hard drive, tuner, and memory are disposed within the housing;

wherein the processing means is configured to read data from a compact disc within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted files, and store  
15 the files within at least one of the memory and the hard drive;

wherein the processing means is configured to send an audio signal representative of the data in the stored files to the audio output; and

wherein the housing meets the specifications of the single DIN standard.

20 15. The audio system according to Claim 14, wherein the processing means is configured to read data from a compact disc within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted files, and store the files within the hard drive, with the reading, encoding, and storing of the data occurring at a rate equal to or faster than a normal rate of play of the data.

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16. An audio system configured to be mounted in a vehicle comprising:  
a housing; and

a processing means communicably connected to a compact disc drive, a user interface, a hard drive, a tuner, and an audio output, wherein the processing means,  
5 compact disc drive, user interface, hard drive, and tuner are disposed within the housing;

wherein the hard drive is readily removable from the audio system and is adapted to be communicably connected to a device that is external to the housing when the hard drive is removed from the audio system.

10 wherein the processing means is configured to read data from a compact disc within the compact disc drive, encode the data into digitally formatted files, and store the files within the hard drive, with the reading, encoding, and storing of the data occurring at a rate equal to or faster than a normal rate of play of the data; and

wherein the processing means is configured to send an audio signal  
15 representative of the data in the stored files to the audio output.

17. The audio system according to Claim 16, wherein the housing meets the specifications of the single DIN standard.

20 18. The audio system according to Claim 16, wherein the audio system further comprises a hard drive.

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